

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00817 01 OF 02 111608Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0817

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT -- JORDAN AND MIDDLE EAST PEACE

1. JORDANIAN VIEWS AND POSITIONS ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE
ARE NOT YET FULLY FORMED AND ARE SHIFTING WITH UNCHARACTERISTIC
RAPIDITY. THIS CABLE IS INTENDED AS AN UPDATE TO YOUR
BRIEFING MATERIALS AND A CAPSULATION OF CURRENT JORDANIAN
VIEWS.

2. GENERAL BACKGROUND: KING HUSSEIN IS MORE AT SEA
THAN I HAVE SEEN HIM FOR LAST THREE YEARS ON WHAT TO
DO. IN THE PAST HE HAS BEEN PRECISE AND POSITIVE; NOW
HE IS STILL SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS. HE ABOVE ALL WILL
WANT TO COORDINATE HIS APPROACHES WITH US AND THE OTHER
ARABS.

3. FOR GOOD REASON, HE BELIEVES THE ISRAELIS WILL
NOT, PERHAPS CANNOT, FACE UP TO THE CHALLENGE OF
NEGTTIATIONS. US HELP IS THUS CRITICAL TO GETTING THE
ISRAELIS REALISTICALLY TO FACE THE SUBSTANTIVE AND
PROCEDURAL CONSEQUENCES OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE KING IS
ALSO DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 00817 01 OF 02 111608Z

OF FAILURE. HE DESIRES A PEACE SETTLEMENT; HE KNOWS
WAR COULD RUIN HIM AND HIS VULNERABLE COUNTRY. HE
IS ATTACHED BY TIES OF EMOTION AND HISTORY TO THE
WEST BANK; HE KNOWS TOO THAT THE LESSONS OF MIDDLE
EAST HISTORY TEACH HIM HE CANNOT MOVE ON SUCH AN
ISSUE WITHOUT ARAB SUPPORT AND BACKING. HE ALSO
BELIEVES, FROM HARD LESSONS OF HISTORY, THAT ARAB

SUPPORT AND BACKING IS TRANSITORY.

4. NEGOTIATIONS: HUSSEIN HAS ALWAYS FAVORED NEGOTIATIONS. HE SHARES WITH MANY OTHER ARABS THE NOTION THAT IF THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT MOVING TOWARD PEACE, IT IS CONDEMNED TO MOVE TOWARD WAR. (THIS SEEMS TO CONTRAST MARKEDLY WITH APPARENT STRO G INTEREST IN ISRAEL, IN KING'S JUDGMENT, IN PRESERVING THE STATUS QUO -- NO PEACE, NO WAR.) HE FAVORS A CAREFULLY PREPARED GENEVA AND THINKS STEP-BY-STEP IS NOW DEAD -- THE FRACTURING OF ARAB UNITY WHICH IT ENTAILS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. THE USE OF THE UN IS ONLY A TACTICAL DEVICE TO BRING PRESSURE, NOT A WAY TO NEGOTIATE PEACE.

5. SUBSTANCE: BELIEF HERE IS THAT SUBSTANCE SHOULD HELP DETERMINE TACTICS AND SHAPE OF FORUM, NOT VIE VERSA. ARABS SHOULD GET BACK ALL TERRITORY LOST IN 1967, BUT JORDAN WILL AGREE TO MINOR RECIPROCAL BORDER RECTIFICATIONS. JERUSALEM MUST BE RETURNED AS IT WAS IN 1967, BUT ARAB AND ISRAELI CITY CAN BE A UNITED, OPEN "CITY OF PEACE". JERUSALEM ISSUE SHOULD BE SETTLED LAST. KING WOULD IF PRESSED PROBABLY BE MORE FLEXIBLE OVER SUBSTANCE. THIS MIGHT BE MORE TRUE IF INTERIM STEPS WERE CONSIDERED. WHAT HE WILL GIVE ISRAELIS IN RETURN IS NOT YET SPELLED OUT, BUT OTHER ARAB WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE WILL PROBABLY LIMIT HIM. HE ALREADY HAS A SORT OF OPEN BORDER WITH ISRAEL. HE SEEMS TO FEAR LESS THAN OTHER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 00817 01 OF 02 111608Z

ARABS THE IDEA OF CONTACT AND INTERCOURSE WITH ISRAELIS IN FUTURE.

6. WEST BANK: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT KING PERSONALLY WOULD LIKE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT FUTURE ROLE ON WEST BANK. THERE ARE SPLITS IN THE COUNTRY WITH SOME GROUPS WANTING HIM TO OPT OUT, OTHERS TO HAVE HIM STAY IN THE WEST BANK NEGOTIATING EFFORT. KING'S VIEWS ARE BUILT ON SOMEWHAT MUTUALLY CONTRADICTORY FRAME- WORK OF FIVE-YEAR OLD UNITED ARAB KINGDON (EAST AND WEST BANK) PLAN AND 1974 RABAT ARAB SUMMIT DECISION. PALESTINIANS MUST DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHAT TO DO ABTUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAELIS SINCE THERE IS TOO MUCH DANGER FOR JORDAN IN ASSUMING THAT ROLE -- OTHER ARABS WOULD INEVITABLY TURN ON JORDAN AS SCAPEGOAT FOR ALL THE CONCESSIONS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE GIVEN TO ISRAEL. AT SAME TIME KING HAS A KIND OF SERENE CONFIDENCE THAT WEST BANKERS, GIVEN A FAIR CHOICE, WILL OPT FOR SOME FUTURE LINK WITH JORDAN.

BEYOND THIS, HE AND HIS POLICIES ARE TORMENTED BY A SERCIES OF
DIFFICULT QUESTIONS. TO NAME A FEW: HOW MUCH INITIATIVE
CAN HE TAKE? HOW CAN HE REDUCE HIS POTENTIAL
VULNERABILITY TO ARAB ATTACKS, INCLUDING POSSIBLE CUT
OFF OF ARAB FINANCIAL AID? WHAT KIND OF LINKS BETWEEN THE
TWO BANKS OF THE JORDAN CAN BE WORKED OUT?

7. TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: IN APPROACHING GENEVA THE KING
WILL WANT TO STAY FLEXIBLE AND APPEAR TO LET EVENTS
PUSH HIM. HE IS UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO COME BACK
UNLESS HELPED BY THE ARABS AND SUPPORTED BY THE US.
HE SEES PRESENT ARAB INTEREST IN HIS RETURN AS A
POSSIBLY HELPFUL SIGN FOR HIM, MOTIVATED BY THEIR
APPARENT DESIRE TO FINESS THE PLO ON THE GENEVA ISSUE
AND TO GET ON WITH RECOVERING THEIR TERRITORIES.

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SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00817 02 OF 02 111609Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 0817

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FOR THE SECRETARY FRTM AMBASSADOR

FOR THE MOMENT, JORDAN IS WILLING TO ATTEND GENEVA
AS A "CONFRONTATION STATE". IN THE MAIN THIS MEANS
IT WILL GO, BUT NOT WITH THE INTENTION OF NEGOTIATING
FOR THE WEST BANK. WHAT THE KING INTENDS TO DO IN
GENEVA BESIDES SIGN AGREEMENTS IS NOT YET CLEAR.
HE WANTS JORDAN TO GO ALONE AND SEPARATELY. HE WILL
ALSO GO IN A UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATITN. HE DOES NOT
WANT TO GO JOINTLY WITH THE PLO, OR TO REPRESENT
THE PALESTINIANS. HE FEELS THE CHANCES FOR BEING
BLAMED FOR ALL THE CONCESSIONS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR
PLO TREACHERY ARE JUST TOO GREAT. NEVERTHELESS, IF
ARAB AND US PRESSURE IS GREAT, AND CONCESSIONS ARE
MADE TO HIM TO PROTECT HIS FUTURE POSITION AND
PARTICULARLY IF ARAB AND US BILATERAL AID IS CON-

TINUED AND POSSIBLY INCREASED, HE COULD WELL BE PERSUADED
TO DROP HIS OBJECTIONS. HIS ADVISORS ARE HOWEVER

DEEPLY DIVIDED OVER WHETHER NOW HE SHOULD QUIETLY
STIMULATE THE PLO AND THE OTHER ARABS INTO MOVING
JORDAN BACK INTO NEGOTIATIONS.

8. THE PLO DIALOGUE: IT HAS NOT YET BEGUN AND MAY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 00817 02 OF 02 111609Z

BE DELAYED BY THE QUEEN'S DEATH. THE KING SEES IT
AS A POSSIBLE WAY FURTHER TO BRING THE PLO INTO A
POSITION WHERE IT IS A FULLY CONTROLLED MEMBER OF
THE ARAB CAMP, INCLUDING IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND AS A
PLACE TO TALK ABOUT LINKS FOR THE FUTURE.
HE BELIEVES THE PLO IS IN DISARRAY OVER THE ISSUES IN
THE DIALOGUE, AS IT IS WITH MOST OTHER MATTERS,
PARTICULARLY REGARDING NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL. HE
IS WORRIED THAT THE PLO MAY BE SEEKING IN SOME
WAY TO REGAIN ITS POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD AT HIS
EXPENSE AND WILL ALSO DEMAND CONCESSIONS FROM
JORDAN HE WILL NOT GIVE -- I.E. GUERILLA BASES AND PLO
POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE EAST BANK.

9. THE US ROLE: KING BELIEVES THIS IS CRUCIAL. HE
SEES THE AREA RETURNING TO WAR, WITH ATTENDANT OIL
PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE US-SOVIET CONFRONTATION
IF THE US DOES NOT PLAN A VITAL MIDDLE-MAN ROLE
IN BRINGING PEACE. THIS WILL REQUIRE
SOME CLEAR DECISIONS BY THE US ON WHAT IT CAN OR
WILL DO WITH ISRAEL. HE IS ALSO CONCERNED THAT
PRESENT MODERATE ARAB LEADERS WILL DISAPPEAR IF THE US DOES
NOT HELP IN THE PEACE PROCESS AS THE NECESSARY CATALYST.
IN HIS MIND, SOME ISSUES ARE ALREADY RESOLVED. ON
NEXT STEPS HIS ANSWER IS "CAREFULLY PLANNED GENEVA
NEGOTIATIONS" AND ON THE US ROLE, HIS ANSWER IS AS A
"CATALYST IN BRINGING ABOUT PROCEDURAL COMPROMISES
TO GET GENEVA GOING, AND SUBSTANTIVE COMPROMISES
TO MAKE IT SUCCESSFUL". HE WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO
SEE SOME ACCEPTANCE OF THE PALESTINIANS AND EVEN THE
PLO AT GENEVA, IF ONLY TO SEE THEM REQUIRED, AND
POSSIBLY FAIL, TO FACE UP TO NEGOTIATIONS, BUT MOST
PREFERABLY NOT THROUGH PARTICIPATION WITH HIM AND THUS
POSSIBLY AT HIS EXPENSE. HE IS PREPARED TO MOVE
BACK INTO A NEGOTIATING POSTURE, BUT WITH SOME
DELIBERATION. MOST OF ALL, HE WILL LOOK FOR CLUES
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 00817 02 OF 02 111609Z

ON WHAT THE US WANTS, AND PARTICULARLY ON WHAT THE US THINKS ABOUT HIS ROLE AND THAT OF THE PLO AT GENEVA. IN ADDITION, THERE IS VERY LITTLE HE COULD DO IN THIS DIRECTION WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF, OR AT MINIMUM, QUIET NON-OBJECTION FROM SAUDI ARABIA, SYRIA AND EGYPT. IN THE EVENT OF DIFFERENCES, KING WILL LOOK FIRST AT HIS OWN SALVATION, AND SECONDLY AT WHAT SYRIA, SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT TELL HIM IN THAT ORDER.

10. IN THIS CONNECTION HE WILL WANT TO KNOW, AS A RESULT OF YOUR VISIT AND HIS CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH US, THE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

(A) HOW DOES THE US SEE ITS ROLE IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS?

(B) WHAT DOES THE US WANT JORDAN TO DO?

(C) WILL THE US INSIST ON KEEPING THE PLO OUT OF GENEVA?

(D) WILL THE US BE PREPARED TO TAKE A RELATIVELY DETAILED POSITION ON THE TYPE OF SETTLEMENT (TERRITORY FOR PEACE) TO BE WORKED OUT AT GENEVA?

(E) CAN THE US GET ISRAEL TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING ON TERRITORY IF THE ARABS AGREE TO KEEP THE PLO OUT OF GENEVA, AT LEAST INITIALLY?

11. FINALLY, JORDAN AND THE KING SEE THEIR CONTEST WITH THE PALESTINIANS IN SHARP PERSPECTIVE. ANY US MOVES TOWARD PALESTINIANS THE KING SEES AS QUITE POSSIBLY BEING AT HIS EXPENSE. HE FEARS LOSS OF HIS POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD AND WITH THE US, AND THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 AMMAN 00817 02 OF 02 111609Z

POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT THIS BRINGS HIM, AS A KEY ELEMENT IN US DEALINGS WITH THE PLO. ULTIMATELY HIS OWN PALESTINIAN POPULATION COULD BECOME A SECURITY PROBLEM FOR HIM UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. HE CAN PROBABLY BE CONVINCED TO GO ALONG WITH ANY US MOVES TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS IF HE IS ASSURED OF CONTINUING US SUPPORT, FINANCIALLY AND POLITICALLY. WHAT IS VITAL IS CONSULTING AND KEEPING HIM INFORMED OF OUR INTENTIONS AND MOVES.

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